4.2.2 NEVADA TEST SITE

A listing of the proposed long-term storage alternatives, subalternatives, and related actions, including the No Action Alternative, at NTS is provided below. The potential impacts of implementing these alternatives and related actions at NTS are described in the following sections: land resources, site infrastructure, air quality and noise, water resources, geology and soils, biological resources, cultural and paleontological resources, socioeconomics, public and occupational health and safety, and waste management. The specific long-term storage alternatives proposed for NTS are the Consolidation Alternative and the Collocation Alternative.

Preferred Alternative

No Action Alternative:

There is no Pu or HEU storage mission currently at NTS; does not add Pu or HEU storage at NTS.

Proposed Storage Activities at Nevada Test Site

- **No Action Alternative (Preferred Alternative):** There is no Pu or HEU storage mission currently at NTS; does not add Pu or HEU storage at NTS.
- **Upgrade Alternative:** This storage alternative does not apply to NTS.
- **Consolidation Alternative:** Two options to accommodate all Pu material within the scope of this PEIS: Modify the existing network of tunnel drifts and construct a new material handling building at the P-Tunnel; or construct a new facility near DAF.
- **Collocation Alternative:** Two options to accommodate all Pu and HEU material within the scope of this PEIS: Modify the existing network of tunnel drifts and construct a larger new material handling building at the P-Tunnel; or construct a larger new facility near the DAF.
- **Subalternative Not Including Strategic Reserve and Weapons Research and Development Materials:** Facility and other resource requirements would be smaller than the Consolidation Alternative and the Collocation Alternative.
- **Phaseout:** This storage activity does not apply to NTS.

4.2.2.1 Land Resources

Preferred Alternative: No Action Alternative

Neither Pu nor HEU is presently stored at NTS. Under the No Action Alternative, existing and planned missions at NTS would continue. The ongoing (no new action) activities would conform with present and future land-use plans, policies, and controls. No effects to land resources would be anticipated at NTS beyond those of existing and future activities that are independent of this action.

Consolidation Alternative

Modify Existing Tunnel Drifts and Construct New Material Handling Building at the P-Tunnel

This option would modify the existing P-Tunnel and construct a new material handling building in Area 12 to accommodate all Pu material within the scope of this PEIS. During construction, 29 ha (72 acres) of land area would be required of which 27 ha (68 acres) would be used during operation. Construction laydown area and the operating facility would be situated entirely on previously disturbed land and would not create any newly disturbed area. As a modification of an existing facility, the 1.6-km (1-mi) buffer zone is established.

Land Use. Utilization of the P-Tunnel in Area 12 would not conform with the master plan of the *Nevada Test Site Development Plan*, which designates the North area of NTS as an underground nuclear weapons test area (NT DOE 1995d:7). However, the P-Tunnel is a potential site for long-term storage and disposition of weapons-usable fissile materials as part of the NTS defense program materials disposition activities considered under the Expanded Use Alternative (part of the Preferred Alternative) of the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Nevada Test Site and Off-Site Locations in the State of Nevada* (NTS EIS) (NT DOE 1996c:3-8,3-9; NT DOE 1996e:A-18). Should the Consolidation Alternative P-Tunnel option be selected, the Expanded Use Alternative of the NTS EIS could be used to revise the current *Nevada Test Site Development Plan*. With these changes, any required construction would be consistent with the land use plan. As discussed in Section 4.2.2.8, sufficient available labor exists within the region to fill the jobs created during construction and operations. There would be no increased demand for housing. Therefore, no indirect impacts on offsite land use would be anticipated.

Use of the P-Tunnel would not affect special status lands as shown in Figure 3.3.1–1. The buffer zone and security area associated with the long-term storage alternative would preclude development within the immediate area. However, the NTS EIS Expanded Use Alternative indicates that adequate land area is available at NTS for facility siting (NT DOE 1996c:3-14, 3-15). The proposal would not affect offsite grazing allotments. No prime farmlands exist onsite. The alternative would not be in conflict with land-use plans, policies, or controls of adjacent jurisdictions since none of these counties or municipalities currently undertake land-use planning. Storage of Pu in the P-Tunnel could impact weapons effects testing ability. It is likely that the P-Tunnel be closed during testing, although it could be kept manned if appropriate safety considerations were met (NT DOE 1995e:1). However, the potential for impacts could be eliminated by test or tunnel design (NT DOE 1996f:1).

Visual Resources. [Text deleted.] Construction and operation of the facility would be compatible with the existing industrialized landscape character of Area 12 and the current VRM Class 5 designation. Although U.S. Route 95 is a heavily traveled public roadway, travelers are unable to view Area 12 facilities because of mountainous terrain and distance.

Construct New Plutonium Storage Facility

All Pu within the scope of this PEIS would be stored at a new storage facility to be constructed at NTS Area 6 near the DAF. The consolidated Pu storage plant at NTS would disturb 58.5 ha (144 acres) of land area during

construction of which 56 ha (138 acres) would be used during operation. A buffer zone would be provided between the facility and the NTS site boundary. Pu storage in existing storage facilities at other DOE sites would be phased out.

Land Use. Construction and operation of the Pu facility would convert undeveloped land in Area 6. The proposed action would not conform with the current *Nevada Test Site Development Plan*, which designates the southeast area of NTS as a nonnuclear test area (NT DOE 1995d:7). However, Area 6 is a potential site for long-term storage and disposition of weapons-usable fissile materials as part of the NTS defense program materials disposition activities considered under the Expanded Use Alternative (part of the Preferred Alternative) of the NTS EIS (NT DOE 1996c:3-8,3-9; NT DOE 1996e:A-18). As discussed in Section 4.2.2.8, no in-migration of workers would be required during construction and operations. No increase in housing demand would be anticipated, with offsite land use not subject to indirect land-use impacts.

Construction and operation would not affect other land uses at NTS or special status lands. The buffer zone and security area associated with the long-term storage alternative would preclude development within the immediate area. However, the Expanded Use Alternative of the NTS EIS indicates that adequate land area is available at NTS for facility siting (NT DOE 1996c:3-14,3-15). The alternative would not affect offsite grazing allotments. No prime farmlands exist onsite. The alternative would not be in conflict with land-use plans, policies, or controls of adjacent jurisdictions since none of these counties or municipalities currently undertake land-use planning.

Visual Resources. [Text deleted.] Construction and operation of the facility would be compatible with the industrial landscape character of the adjacent DAF and the current VRM Class 5 designation of Area 6. Views of the alternative would be blocked from sensitive viewpoints accessible to the public by mountainous terrain.

Collocation Alternative

Modify Existing Tunnel Drifts and Construct New Material Handling Building at the P-Tunnel

Under this action, the existing P-Tunnel located in Area 12 is proposed to be utilized, and a new material handling building would be constructed at the P-Tunnel. Land disturbance would be 29 ha (72 acres) during construction of which 27 ha (68 acres) would be used during operations. Construction laydown area and the operating facility would be situated entirely on previously disturbed land and would not create any newly disturbed area. Effects to land resources during construction and operation would be similar to those of the new and modified P-Tunnel for the Consolidation Alternative. As discussed in Section 4.2.2.8, in-migration would occur only during the operation phase. Projected vacancies within the housing stock would be sufficient to accommodate the slight increase in demand. Therefore, no indirect effects to offsite land use would be anticipated.

Construct New Plutonium and Highly Enriched Uranium Storage Facilities

The new storage facility would be located on undisturbed land in Area 6 near the DAF and would disturb a land area of 89.5 ha (221 acres) during construction of which 87 ha (215 acres) would be used during operations. A buffer zone would be provided between operations and the NTS site boundary. Direct and indirect land resources effects would be similar to the Consolidation Alternative, new storage facility.

Subalternative Not Including Strategic Reserve and Weapons Research and Development Materials

Under this subalternative, land effects during construction and operation would be almost the same in extent and magnitude to the Consolidation Alternative and Collocation Alternative because the facility would be almost the

same. However, because the smaller quantity of material would require smaller facilities, it is likely that less land area would be disturbed during construction and used during operations. [Text deleted.]

[Text deleted.]